



Shate refugee camp © WHO.

MoH health-related data 2013

Gaza population	1.7 million
Under 15 years	43.6%
Dependency ratio	85
Median age	17.6 years
Reported births	60,000
Unemployment (World Bank data)	28%
Refugees	67.4%

Casualties

After three days of violence, by mid-afternoon 10 July 2014, more than 80 persons have been killed (17 children; 16 females), and over 570 persons injured (120 children; 170 females), according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in the Gaza Strip, with scores of building destroyed or damaged. No Israeli casualties have been reported thus far.

Health workers and structures affected

Four health facilities and an ambulance were damaged after Israeli air strikes hit sites in their immediate vicinity:

The Gaza European Hospital suffered damage which injured one nurse and forced evacuation of the ICU and the paediatrics ward, after an air strike in the area caused the light ceiling in the ICU to fall. The eastern wall outside the hospital was also damaged.

The Foukhairy clinic in Rafah, in the south of Gaza, was badly affected and closed following an airstrike in a nearby area.

In Jabalia refugee camp, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society's Emergency Medical Service centre, including its primary health care (PHC) clinic was damaged in an air strike in nearby land. 15 EMS workers and volunteers were injured slightly by debris, and 3 ambulances were damaged and disabled. The centre serves 50 000 people in the Jabalia area in the north of the West Bank.

Three paramedics were injured in Deir al Balah when the ambulance in which they were travelling passed a house as it was hit in an air attack.

In Gaza city, the Jamila al Ashy primary health care centre had windows and doors damaged from an air strike beside it, but the clinic remains functioning.

Attacks on health care services, providers and users during armed conflict, including occupation, violates international humanitarian law as well as international human rights law. States must also not carry out actions which jeopardize health access under any circumstances.

Health system functioning

Hospitals operated by the Ministry of Health in Gaza Strip are functioning but must cope with the large number of traumatic injuries with severely depleted medical supplies. Shortages of medicines were at high levels even before the latest crisis: 28% of essential medicines were at zero stock and another 16% were at very low stock (less than 12 weeks' supply). Shortages of medical consumables were reported at 54% of needed items, including basic items such as anaesthesia drugs, sutures and materials for bone injuries, according to the Pharmacy director general in Gaza. The hospitals are freeing beds by moving patients to other hospitals as needs arise.

Electricity is chronically not stable and works on 8-hour shifts by neighbourhood. Although hospital lines are more reliable for longer periods, hospital diesel generators must power services for hours every day and during electricity breaks. Currently hospitals have fuel reserves for 7 days, and cope by rationalizing power within the hospital and cutting non-vital services, and by ad hoc fuel donations.

Clinics remain functioning except for seven primary health care centres located near borders or front line areas which were closed as preventative measures. The Ministry of Health is redeploying staff who cannot travel to facilities near their residences. All health surveillance systems are operating as normally.

Health partners: Five out of 45 ambulances operated by the Palestinian Red Crescent are not functioning. 358 ambulance evacuations of injured persons have been made, with an estimated 150 cases transported by private car. UNRWA will begin distributing 135 000 litres of fuel to the health sector on 12 July, through donations provided by the Islamic Development Bank. UNRWA's 21 primary health care centres, including 6 Level 4 centres, are operating normally, and usually receive 80 000 patients per week. The Palestinian Medical Relief Society is operating clinics in marginalized areas and the Union of Health Work Committees' al Awdeh hospital is providing free treatment for casualty patients in the northern sector of the Gaza Strip.

Referrals

Fifty patients and companions were able to travel to referral hospitals in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Israel on 10 July, after receiving permits for access. However, 25 other patients were not able to reach Erez checkpoint due to the air attacks.

Appeal

WHO is working with the Palestinian Ministry of Health and other health partners and humanitarian agencies to ensure the provision of essential medicines and medical consumables. The Ministry of Health and WHO issued an appeal to the international community on 10 July 2014, for US\$ 80 million for the Ministry of Health to ensure sufficient supplies of medicine, medical supplies and referral care for Palestinian patients, and particularly for the growing needs in the Gaza Strip, already beset by shortages and working under emergency circumstances.

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